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Vatican Radio Welcomes Press Reactions

(Rome) - A Vatican Radio broadcast on February 3, entitled "True Unity", welcomed favourably press reactions to the Pope's announcement of the forthcoming general council of the Roman Catholic Church, especially in the Protestant world.

The Vatican station indicated that Protestants would not be invited to take part in the general council, but that talks with Protestants might be sought in connection with it.

Dealing with Protestant attitudes toward unity, the broadcast said it was "necessary to recognize that two different conceptions of unity exist".

"At the present moment", said the broadcast, "the sole consistent, world-wide and generally accepted expression of faith as well as the sole universally recognised authority in things Christian are to be found in the Catholic Church". The aim of churches separated from Rome in their quest for unity was described as seeking "the greatest common denominator in a fair and penetrating debate, a minimum of common positions". The broadcast did not specifically mention the World Council of Churches.

Although the broadcaster saw a fundamental opposition between the two conceptions as he outlined them, he emphasised that existence of the difference should

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not dash all hopes of complete unity.

Pope John XXIII, receiving members of the Roman Catholic Armenian community in Rome, expressed hope that the Armenian Church, which is monphysite (believing that Christ had only one nature), would one day be reunited with Rome. He stressed the veneration of the Virgin Mary and the doctrine of the Trinity as possible bases for conversations between the Roman Catholic Church and the churches of the Christian East.

A series of broadcasts, to inform listeners about non-Roman Catholic churches, has been inaugurated by the Vatican Radio. The first in the series was on Anglicanism.

EPS, Geneva

Church of England Considers Admission of Women as Lay Readers

(London) - The use of women as lay readers in the Church of England was approved by the House of Laity on February 2 in London. The convocations of Canterbury and York will now be asked to admit women to the office.

During the debate on the motion, Mrs. Betty Ridley, prominent Anglican laywoman, said that she could see no justification for the church treating laymen and women differently in their opportunities for serving.

Commenting on the action, the "Church Times" said "this is a completely distinct thing from the ordination of women priests. Here it is, by definition, a lay activity which is in question. We know of no theological principles which can be held to differentiate between permissible activities in church by members of the laity, on grounds simply of their sex. The principle of allowing women to read morning and evening prayer and to give addresses other than at Holy Communion, has already been conceded with regard to deaconesses.... In the mission field.... it is common to find women playing a considerable part in public worship."

EPS, Geneva

US Religious Leaders Join in Plea to Government Heads

(Washington, D.C.) - US religious leaders, along with a group of scientists, labour and political figures have asked the heads of government of the Big Three for "constructive and constant leadership to find an end to the arms race which is placing all mankind in jeopardy".

Signers of the message, which went to President Eisenhower, Nikita Khrushchev and Prime Minister Macmillan, included Dr. Edwin T. Dahlberg, president of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, Dr. Harold E. Fey, editor of the "Christian Century", Norman Cousins, editor of the "Saturday Review of Literature", Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, Norman Thomas, former Socialist Party presidential party candidate, and Victor Reuther, administrative assistant to the president of the United Auto Workers. The message said that "nations which can mobilize scientific talent and resources to develop the H-bomb and ICBM missiles ought to be able to devise a workable inspection system. There are elements of risk in any agreement, but the risks of continuing the arms race are even greater."

EPS, Geneva

Missouri Synod Declines NLC Invitation for Talks

(Milwaukee) - The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod's decision not to hold exploratory talks leading to possible membership in the National Lutheran Council has been received with "surprise and regret" by the council at its forty-first annual meeting in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Dr. Paul C. Empie, NLC executive director, said he hoped that the Missouri body would reconsider "so that conversations looking toward a solution of the present fragmentation of this witness may not be unduly delayed." Dr. Empie's statement was in reply to a letter from Dr. John W. Behnken, Missouri Synod president, which said that his church "respectfully declined" an invitation from the council for exploratory talks. Dr. Behnken said that seven of the eight bodies in the council are now involved in two mergers and that the "doctrinal" positions of the groups are uncertain and in a "state of flux".

In his reply, Dr. Empie said, "We deem this time during which several Lutheran bodies are remoulding their organizational life as holding particular opportunity for a clarification of position on this subject, which could be of immense mutual benefit to all concerned."

The National Lutheran Council is a cooperative agency made up of eight Lutheran bodies with a membership of about five million persons, two-thirds of all Lutherans in the United States. The Missouri Synod, with 2,228,000 members, is the largest Lutheran body outside the council. EPS, Geneva

"Awakening Conscience" in South Africa, Dr. de Blank Says

(Cape Town) - There are signs of an "awakening conscience" among the citizens of South Africa regarding the government's apartheid policy, according to Dr. Joost de Blank, Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town.

Writing in "Good Hope", the official publication of his archdiocese, Dr. de Blank said, "I believe we can enter 1959 with a new spirit of hopefulness. One indication of this awakening conscience is ever more elaborate and fantastic justifications for the current racial policy." Advocates of apartheid, Dr. de Blank said, are admitting that they have failed to get their ideas completely accepted.

Referring to hopeful signs, the archbishop cited recent protests against the practice in Cape Town of barring non-Europeans from jobs in the municipal departments and against a proposal to put coloured voters on a separate roll for municipal elections. Dr. de Blank said another sign was the recent "remarkable" service in Cape Town Cathedral on the Day of the Covenant, a religious holiday especially sacred to the Afrikaaner people. He said that white, black and coloured people knelt side by side to receive the sacrament from ministers of the three racial groups.

"All over the country," Dr. de Blank continued, "the tide of moral conviction is rising. In time it will wash away the cruel rocks of arrogance and pride and soften the hardness of men's hearts." EPS, Geneva

CWS to Help Raise $140,000 for White Russian Refugees

(Atlantic City, New Jersey) - Contributions of $140,000 to bring 9,000 White Russian refugees from China to Hong Kong and on to new homes in various parts of the world will be asked of American Protestants. The programme was approved by the Board of Managers of Church World Service, the relief arm of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, at a meeting in Atlantic City this month. Many of the refugees will be resettled in Australia and Latin America.

"It is time we brought an end to the suffering of these people," Dr. Norris Wilson, CWS executive director, said. EPS, Geneva

WCC Executive Committee Asks End to Atomic Testing

(Geneva) - A statement urging the cessation of atomic tests has been adopted by the Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting from February 9 - 13 in Geneva.

Recognising that "any agreement, however carefully framed, involves a measure of calculated risk for all parties," the statement says that "in face of the atomic peril, so fraught with grave consequences for present and future generations, acceptance of such risk is surely justified."

"Moreover," the statement continued, "every agreement is one more step in the struggle to allay suspicion and build confidence. To make tests to cease is important in itself."

The statement was drawn up by officers of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs and presented to the committee for its approval. It was given to the heads of the British, American and Soviet delegations now holding talks in Geneva on the cessation of atomic tests.

The statement was commended to the World Council's 171 member churches and urged them "to do everything possible to build an informed public opinion about these issues which are vitally at stake and to make such representations to their governments as they deem proper, especially in countries whose governments are directly involved in the negotiations on the cessation of tests."

The text of the statement reads:

"Ever since man unleashed the power of the atom, the peoples of the world have feared its threat of destruction and sought the promise which this development has offered. They have searched hopefully, but thus far without success, for steps by which to minimize the danger of war and to release power for peace.

"The Conference on the Cessation of Tests now meeting in Geneva could break the current deadlock. The considerable progress achieved in the technical approach to the detection of tests should now make it possible for political leaders to reach constructive agreements.

"Both the World Council of Churches and its members in many parts of the world have repeatedly pleaded in statements and representations for an approach to disarmament which could start from a controlled cessation of tests. Therefore this Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches, currently meeting in Geneva during days which are critical for the Conference, welcomes the efforts to this end now being put forth.

"We realise that the question of international control is the crux. The powers of the control commission, as well as the composition of the inspection teams, are in dispute. Perseverance in the effort to resolve these difficulties is a responsibility which the negotiating governments bear towards all peoples.

"It must be recognised that any agreement, however carefully framed, involves a measure of calculated risk for all parties. Yet in face of the atomic peril, so fraught with grave consequences for present and future generations, acceptance of such risk is surely justified. Moreover, every agreement is one more step in the struggle to allay suspicion and build confidence.

"To make tests to cease is important in itself. To demonstrate that international controls are feasible in relation to the cessation of testing can, in the long run, prove even more worth while in the development of regulated and progressive disarmament.

"In commending this statement to our member churches throughout the world, we urge them to do everything possible to build an informed public opinion about these issues which are vitally at stake and to make such representations to their governments as they deem proper, especially in countries whose governments are directly involved in the negotiations on the cessation of tests. We further request the officers of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs to bring this statement personally to the attention of the heads of the delegations at the current conference - the United Kingdom, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States - and to pursue these objectives through every appropriate means."

A leading item on the agenda of the Executive Committee was a discussion of the recent Roman Catholic decision to call a general council.

Following a report to the committee by the WCC General Secretary, Dr. W.A. Visser 't Hooft, the committee discussed Protestant and Orthodox church reactions to the Pope's summoning of the general council for 1961.

Among other subjects discussed were the report of Dr. H.H. Wolf, director of the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Institute, on a two-man WCC "fraternal visit" made two weeks ago to the Church of Cyprus. Dr. Wolf was accompanied on the mission by Bishop John Cullberg of the Church of Sweden.

Dr. Visser 't Hooft reported briefly to the committee on the condition of the churches in Rumania, Spain and China.

Tributes were paid at the opening session to five leaders of the ecumenical movement who have died since the August meeting of the Central Committee in Nyborg, Denmark. They were: Bishop G.K.A. Bell of the United Kingdom, an honorary president of the council; Bishop Eivind Berggrav of Norway, a former president; and Bishop Volkmar Herntrich of Germany; Archbishop Howard W.K. Mowll and the Rev. C. Denis Ryan of Australia, all members of the Central Committee.

The sessions in Geneva were the group's first since the 90-member Central Committee met last August. The Executive Committee holds annual summer and winter meetings. It is elected by the Central Committee, the larger body which carries out World Council decisions made by the Assembly of the WCC at its meetings every six years.

Among those present were Bishop Sante Uberto Barbieri of Argentina, Bishop

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Otto Dibelius of Germany and Bishop Henry Knox Sherrill of the United States, all WCC presidents; Dr. Franklin Clark Fry of the United States, chairman of the 14-member committee; Dr. Ernest Payne of the United Kingdom; Professor Josef L. Hromadka of Czechoslovakia; Dr. Martin Niemöller of Germany and the Rev. Peter K. Dagadu of Ghana. EPS, Geneva

In Brief

The Baptist Missionary Society of Great Britain has approved in principle the integration of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council. The action was taken by the society's General Committee at a meeting last month in London.

* *

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland will get its eighth diocese this year. A new bishop will be elected this spring for the diocese, which will include Helsinki. The reorganization is necessary, the church's Ecclesiastical Board says, because of the growth of the church. More than 450,000 of its million members live in Helsinki.

* *

The Rev. Akira Ebisawa, 75, a leader of the Japan National Christian Council, died in January. Mr. Ebisawa was general secretary of the NCC from 1926 until just prior to the beginning of World War II. He also helped establish the Christian Children's Fund, Japan Church World Service and an organization to aid the blind. Just before his death he had completed a history of the Protestant church in Japan for use in the centennial celebration next year.

* *

Student Christian Movement leaders in Europe held their annual meeting in Hagen, Germany, on January 22 - 25 to discuss the work of their movements, East-West relationships and Student Christian Movement responsibility in political life. The group also made plans for an all-Europe conference on the Life and Mission of the Church in connection with the World's Student Christian Federation programme on this subject.

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The Finnish Missionary Society celebrated its 100th anniversary last month. Plans for the future include new work in Islamic countries and among bushmen in south west Africa.

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A series of Lutheran-Orthodox conferences, arranged by the Lay Training Institute of the Church of Finland and the Ecumenical Council of Finland will be held in Finland, in May. Also attending will be staff members of the Ecumenical Institute of the World Council of Churches. The largest conference, which will study the problem of church unity from both the Orthodox and Lutheran standpoints, is planned for May 23 - 27.

* *

Sunday, February 15 will be observed in the northern hemisphere as the Universal Day of Prayer for Students, sponsored by the World's Student Christian Federation and its member movements.

* *

A new Information Office for the Church of England will be set up on May 1, according to a decision taken last week by the Church Assembly, meeting in London. During the discussion of the proposal an Assembly member said, "Let us have a man in charge of this important work who can write in such a way that dad will read it at tea while mum is cooking the kippers." EPS, Geneva

ECUMENICAL CALENDAR
1959

February 6-21	WSCF, Bible Study Leaders' Training	Sao Paulo/Brazil
February 12-14	LWF, Commission on World Service	Geneva
February 13-14	WCC/YMCF Consultation on Church-Lay Movement Relationships	Geneva
February 14-17	Lausanne European Youth Assembly Chairman, Committee Meeting	Coventry/England
February 15	Ecumenical Institute, end of 7th session	Bossey/Switzerland.
February 15-17	WCC, Inter-Church Aid Administrative Committee	Geneva
February 18-21	WCC, Inter-Church Aid Migration Conference Preparatory Commission	Geneva
February 19-20	WCC, Youth Department, European Youth Matters Group	Vienna
February 23-24	WCC, Youth Department, European Working Group	Holland
February 23-26	YMCA, President's Committee	Geneva
February 25-26	NCCC in the USA, General Board	Hertford, Conn.
February 28-March 1	WCC, Faith and Order, Theological Commission on Tradition and Traditions, American Section	New York
March 1	502nd Anniversary Unitas Fratrum - Moravian and Czech-Moravian Brethren	
March 2-9	WCCESSA, Conference on "The Present Task of the Sunday School"	Salzerbad/Austria
March 8	Church World Service, One Great Hour of Sharing	
March 9-10	UBS, Sub-Committee on Bible Illustrations	London
March 11-16	WCC, Inter-Church Aid, Fraternal Workers' Retreat	Glion/ Switzerland
March 16-20	YWCA, International Seminar in relation with the 13th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women	New York
March 20-24	Ecumenical Institute, Conference of Philosophers	Bossey
March 30-April 4	Ecumenical Institute, Study Conference on Problems of East European Culture and Church Life	Bossey
March 31-April 4	Seminar on Christian Obedience in Africa Today, organised by John Knox House under the auspices of the WCC's Department on the Laity	Geneva
March 31-April 5	WCC, Division of Studies, Commission on "The Lordship of Christ over the Church and the World".	Arnoldshain/ Germany
April 1-3	The Associated Church Press, Annual Convention	Washington, D.C.
April 3-8	WCC, Faith and Order, Theological Commission on Worship	Heidelberg

April 6-10	WCC, Faith and Order, Lutheran-Reformed Consultation	Arnoldshain/ Germany
April 6-11	LWF, European Stewardship Conference	Hoisbüttel
April 7-11	Ecumenical Institute, CCIA Conference	Bossey
April 13-20	LWF, Latin America Committee	Buenos Aires
April 14-15	World Christian Youth Commission Meeting	Bossey
April 14-17	LWF, Latin America Conference	Buenos Aires
April 16	WCCESSA, British Committee	London
April 16-25	YMCA, 5th Asian YMCA Leaders' Conference	Gotamba/Japan
April 17	RAVEMCCO Spring Meeting	New York
April 19-26	Ecumenical Institute, Orthodox Seminar	Bossey
April 20-23	Church Peace Mission, Third National Conference on "The Word of God in the Nuclear Age".	Evanston/Ill.
April 22	WCC, Executive Committee of the US Conference for the World Council of Churches	Buck Hill Falls/Pa.
April 22-24	US Conference for the WCC	Buck Hill Falls
April 23-27	Presbyterian Church US, General Assembly	Atlanta/Ga./USA
April 26-May 2	Berlin Ecumenical Youth Leaders' Course, sponsored by the Youth Department of the WCC and the Oekumenischer Arbeitskreis, Germany	Berlin
May 1-6	WCC, Department on the Cooperation of Men and Women in Church and Society, Consultation	Anandagiri/Nilgiri Hills/India
May 1-8	UBS, deputation visit to Japan	Japan
May 4-6	WCC, Inter-Church Aid, Administrative Committee	Geneva
May 5	United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia, Annual Meeting	New York
May 5-6	WCCESSA, North American Committee	New York
May 6-13	Ecumenical Institute, Conference for Architects	Bossey
May 14-26	East Asia Christian Council Assembly	Malaya
May 19-22	Lausanne European Youth Assembly Preparatory Committee	Amsterdam
May 19-28	YMCA, "Science, Industry and Faith", a Consultation on Youth and Christian Faith in the Welfare State	Mainau/Germany
May 20-26	WCC, Youth Department, Conference of Work Camp Leaders	Bossey
May 26-27	United Presbyterian Church in the USA, General Assembly	Indianapolis
May 27 - June 1	UBS, Asian Regional Conference	Bangkok
May 29-31	Ecumenical Institute, Consultation for Politicians and Theologians	Bossey

May 22-24	WCC, Faith and Order, Theological Commission on Worship	USA
June 2-4	UBS, Standing Committee	Bangkok
June 3-4	NCCC in the USA, General Board	Seattle, Wash.
June 4-9	American Baptist Convention	Des Moines/Iowa
June 8-12	WCCESSA, Latin Countries Conference	Belgium
June 15-22	Annual Synod of the Augustana Lutheran Church	
June 15-28	Ecumenical Institute, Course on Bible Study: "Living with the Bible"	Bossey
June 16-21	Church of the Brethren, Annual Conference	Ocean Grove/N.J.
July 1-4	Evangelical and Reformed General Synod	Oberlin/Ohio
July 1-15	Ecumenical Institute, Course for Missionaries and Pastors on "The Mission of the Church in Conditions of Rapid Social Change"	Bossey
July 2-9	WSCF, Executive Committee	Berlin ?
July 5-8	United Church of Christ, General Synod	Oberlin/Ohio
July 6	Czech Moravian Brethren, 544th Anniversary Martyrdom of John Hus	
July 7-8	Czech Moravian Brethren, Biennial Synod	West, Texas
July 14-15	IMC, Theological Education Fund Executive Committee	Paris
July 15-25	WSCF, Caribbean Theological Student Course	Cuba
July 16-18	IMC, Theological Education Fund Committee	Paris
July 17-27	International Student Conference on "Christian Life in a Scientific Age", sponsored jointly by the YMCA Institute of Mainau and the WSCF	Mainau/ Germany
July 19-23	YMCA, Executive Committee	Geneva
July 20-25	IMC, Administrative Committee	Paris
July 20-31	Ecumenical Institute, Course for Laymen on "Christian Unity and Commitment in the World"	Bossey
July 20-August 1	WCC, Faith and Order, Theological Commission on Christ and the Church	Tutzing/ Germany
July 22-25	WCC, Faith and Order, Study Commission on Institutionalism	Tutzing
July 23-30	YWCA, Young Adult Conference	Bièvres near Paris
July 24-25	World Presbyterian Alliance, Executive Committee	Sao Paulo
July 25-August 2	International Conference on Rapid Social Change	Anatolia College Thessaloniki
July 27-31	WCCESSA, World Education Services Committee and Board of Managers	Glasgow

July 27-August 6	World Presbyterian Alliance, 18th General Council	Sao Paulo
July 30-August 6	LWF, Commission on World Missions	Nyborg Strand
August 3-14	WCC, Faith and Order, Working Committee (and re-organised committees for Assembly preparation)	Villach/Austria
August 3-24	Ecumenical Institute/WSCF Course for Theological Students on "Church, Christian Culture and Mission"	Bossey
August 4	WCC, Plenary Assembly Commissions	Spittal/Austria
August 4-13	WCC, Church and Society, Working Committee	Spittal/Austria
August 4-14	WCC, Department on the Cooperation of Men and Women in Church and Society, Working Committee	Spittal/Austria
August 4-14	WCC, Department on the Laity, Working Committee	Spittal/Austria
August 5-7	WCC, Inter-Church Aid, Working Committee	Spittal
August 5-8	WCC, Department of Information, Working Committee	Spittal
August 5-8	WCC, Department of Missionary Studies, Working Committee	Spittal
August 5-8	WCC, Department on Evangelism, Working Committee	Spittal
August 5-10	WCC/WCCE Youth Committee	Spittal
August 6-9	LWF, Pastoral Conference	Oxford
August 7-10	WCC, CCIA Executive	Spittal
August 8-9	WCC, Inter-Church Aid Administrative Committee	Spittal
August 10-12	WCC, Assembly Commissions	Spittal
August 10-13	WSCF, European Conference on work in Teacher Training Colleges	Bath/England
August 10-15	LWF, Commission on Theology	Amsterdam
August 13-15	IMC/WCC, Joint Committee	Spittal
August 15-18	WCC, Faith and Order, Orthodox Consultation	Athens
August 16-17	WCC, Department on the Cooperation of Men and Women in Church and Society, Consultation with Greek Women (not yet definite)	Athens
August 16-20	LWF, Pastoral Conference	Neuendettelsau/ Germany
August 17-18	WCC, Executive Committee	Athens
August 18-29	WCC, Central Committee	Rhodes
August 22-26	WCC, Faith and Order, Theological Commission on Tradition and Traditions, European section	Oude Poelgeest/ Holland
August 23- September 12	UBS, Exhibition of Bible Illustrations	Edinburgh
August 28- September 1	Ecumenical Institute, Conference of Church Historians	Bossey
August 28- September 2	International Convention Assembly, Disciples of Christ	Denver/ Colorado

August 31-September 4	UBS, Conference on Bible Illustrations	Edinburgh
September 1-5	WCC, Department on the Laity, Consultation with Church Historians on "The Laity in Historic Perspective"	Bossey
September 2-5	LWF, Commission on World Service	Paris
September 6-8	UBS, Translation Sub-Committee	Edinburgh
September 7-12	Ecumenical Institute, Consultation on the Meaning of the Secular	Bossey
September 16-25	YMCA, "Growing Up in Today's Society", a consultation on living ethics for youth in the welfare state	Mainau
September 20-22	YWCA, Pre-Council Consultations	Cuernavaca/Mexico
September 21-26	Swiss Week of Pastoral Theology, organised by a group of pastors of French-speaking Switzerland	Bossey
September 23-October 9	World YWCA Council Meeting	Cuernavaca/Mexico
September 29-October 1	UBS/WCC/IMC Cooperating Committee on the Place and Use of the Bible	Geneva
October 1-February 15	Eighth Session of the Graduate School of Ecumenical Studies	Bossey
October 2	UBS, Standing Committee	Geneva
October 7-10	WCC, Inter-Church Aid Consultation on Promotion	Eastbourne
October 20-22	NCCC in the USA, National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country, Department of Town and Country Church	Louisville/Kentucky
October 22	WCCESSA, British Committee	London
October 27-November 4	YMCA, Consultation on "The Place and Rôle of Girls and Women in the YMCA"	Mainau
November 8-14	YMCA/YWCA World Week of Prayer	
November 8-18	Thirteenth European Ecumenical Youth Secretaries Consultation	Lund/Sweden
November 19-20	WCCESSA, North American Committee	New York
December 2-3	NCCC in the USA, General Board	Detroit
December 8	Friends of the World Council of Churches, Inc. Annual Meeting	New York
December 8	Executive Committee of the US Conference for the World Council of Churches	New York
December 12-14	World Presbyterian Alliance, Theological Commission of the European Area	Geneva
December 27-January 1	Eighteenth Student Volunteer Movement Quadrennial Conference on the Christian World Mission	Athens/Ohio
December 27-January 2	Eighteenth Quadrennial Conference of the Student Volunteer Movement on Christian Missions	Athens/Ohio